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ABSTRACT

Networking among youth service and juvenile justice agencies can help coordinate their functions and increase mutual cooperation and communication, with the goal of maximizing the efficiency and effectiveness of services. This bulletin describes three such networks and their planning and implementation. (Author)

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Technical Assistance Bulletin 14

Youth Service and Juvenile Justice Networks

Summary

Networking among youth service and juvenile justice agencies can help coordinate their functions and increase mutual cooperation and communication, with the goal of maximizing the efficiency and effectiveness of services. This bulletin describes three such networks and their planning and implementation.

The Problem

Youth crime and delinquency and school disruption are community problems which require a collaborative community response involving public and private human service agencies, citizens, and youth. The various components of the juvenile justice system and youth service providers have tended to operate and evolve independently, and their differences have been accentuated as human service providers have taken a broader approach to service delivery. Fragmentation of the system hampers its efficiency and effectiveness in several ways. The various agencies and programs do not share management concepts, processes, or goals, making collaboration, communication, and evaluation more difficult. Discrepancies in goals develop, or efforts may be duplicated. Lack of community involvement hinders needs assessment and can lead to inappropriate system responses and community resistance.

The Solution

Participation in planning by all concerned furthers collaborative learning and program development. A more cooperative system can increase the efficiency and effectiveness of services, thereby reducing juvenile crime and delinquency and fostering greater mutual respect and understanding between service agencies, citizens, and youth. A network approach is being used in several areas to help effect these changes.

Generally, a network consists of a core of leaders working with resource people for their mutual benefit. Network activities usually include an information clearinghouse, policymaking, and evaluation focusing on the quality of the network operation.

Steps to be followed in organizing a network are--

- o Identifying the issues of concern
- o Identifying the skills and expertise available
- o Providing a forum to explore the issues and share skills and expertise
- o Formalizing a system for conveying information.

Two youth service and juvenile justice networks currently operating are the Lucas County (Ohio) Task Force on Truancy and the David V. Kenyon Juvenile Justice Center in Los Angeles County. A network for delinquency prevention is being organized by the Maryland Juvenile Services Administration.

Lucas County (Ohio) Task Force on Truancy

The concept behind the Lucas County Task Force on Truancy grew out of the concerns of Judge Andy Devine about truancy and low-level juvenile crime and his belief that greater emphasis on school attendance can discourage juvenile delinquency. Judge Devine also noted a lack of uniformity in referrals made by schools and other agen-

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cies. He conferred with representatives of the Toledo-Lucas County Criminal Justice Regional Planning Unit and other public agencies, and a coalition was formed on truancy issues.

Concurrent with the State's progress towards deinstitutionalization, the Regional Planning Unit brought together representatives from schools, courts, police, youth authorities, and the child welfare agency; and since that time the group has grown. Through this coalition, procedures and policies have been developed clearly outlining the truancy referral process and the responsibilities of the agencies.

The Task Force on Truancy, now in its third year of operation, consists of 40 to 50 representatives of boards of education, the Children's Services Board, the Ohio Youth Commission, local police departments, juvenile court, and the Toledo-Lucas County Criminal Justice Regional Planning Unit. The membership was selected in recognition of the need to involve these organizations as well as other social service agencies, local business and industry, community centers, medical and mental health facilities, recreational facilities, and religious organizations in the planning and provision of remedial youth services.

The task force meets monthly to discuss the roles of the various agencies and develop truancy policies in an effort to expedite and make uniform the handling of truancy problems and referral processes.

In 1977, the task force developed a manual outlining truancy policies and procedures from initial school involvement through referral to the Children's Services Board to juvenile court (as a last resort). The school's responsibilities in this process are--

- Mobilizing contacts with the student and his or her family through telephone calls, conferences (with the student, school personnel, parents, administrators, and teachers, as necessary), correspondence with the family, and home visits
- Referral to appropriate school personnel, such as teachers, administrators, the attendance worker, counselor, or school psychologists
- Identifying absence/truancy patterns as early as possible.

If the student is currently receiving services from agencies such as the Children's Services Board, probation department, or youth commission, the case is cleared with the agency through established procedures, and any caseworker(s) involved are kept informed of the progress of the case.

One or two educational planning conferences are conducted by the school personnel managing the case to review steps previously taken to stop truancy, assess the student's current attendance record, choose alternative educational plans or assistance as appropriate, provide legal written notice of absence to the parent(s), and inform the parent(s) and student of referral to the Children's Services Board or juvenile court (if truancy does not stop).

The Children's Services Board's function in these cases is to provide diversion services and report to the referral source. If necessary, referral is made to juvenile court by way of a complaint by the school against the truant child or against his or her parent(s) or guardian(s), as recommended by the court's Unruly Coordinator. School officials and parents are involved throughout the court process.

David V. Kenyon Juvenile Justice Center, Los Angeles

In Los Angeles County, the concept of a geographically centralized system of juvenile justice services was conceived by Los Angeles County Juvenile Court Judge David V. Kenyon and Los Angeles Police Chief Edward M. Davis. An existing Ad Hoc Committee on Juvenile Justice was chaired by the police chief and included representatives of the California Youth Authority; county court and justice system offices, Los Angeles city schools, police, and other judicial departments; and the Urban Coalition. A subcommittee appointed to develop plans for the Juvenile Justice Center also included officials from the county social services and community services departments and the Criminal Justice Planning Institute of the University of Southern California.

A proposal, describing the center's organization, referral and intake processes, and procedures for interaction between the various agencies, was submitted to the Los

Angeles County Board of Supervisors in 1974. In 1976 the David V. Kenyon Juvenile Justice Center was opened in the Watts section of Los Angeles to house the participating service providers in an effort to pool knowledge and resources, coordinate services, and improve communication among the agencies. The overall goal was to develop more efficient and effective methods for alleviating juvenile crime, especially in schools. Public agency representatives also consult with the center's Community Advisory Board in developing juvenile justice policy and processes.

The specific objectives of the center are to--

- Reduce by 50 percent the time required to process a juvenile court petition request
- Reduce by 25 percent the time required to calendar a release petition in court
- Reduce the recidivism rate of first offenders
- Reduce juvenile arrests within one year
- Reduce the recidivism rate of hard core offenders within one year.

The basic components of the Juvenile Justice Center are juvenile court, the case evaluation panel, a resource coordinator, and the community advisory group. In addition to juvenile court, offices and agencies also participating in the center are the probation department, county clerk, county district attorney, city police department, county sheriff's department, city schools, county public defender, county community development department, county public social services department, and the California Youth Authority.

Referrals to the center are usually made by law enforcement personnel, school officials, or parents. To be eligible for services from the center, the minor must have violated juvenile law and live within the center's jurisdiction or have committed an offense in that area.

The case evaluation panel, usually consisting of five or six representatives of schools, the probation department, law enforcement, and other groups as needed, makes the intake disposition. The panel may recommend services--such as diversion, therapy and counseling, education for crime prevention, and control and supervision--or refer the case to juvenile court. Specific case dispositions include--

- Closing at intake
- Referral to community agency, probation or parole officer (for active cases), or intake probation officer (for possible referral to juvenile court)
- Directing minor to make restitution, repairs, etc.
- Continuing investigation (up to 3 days) to obtain more information
- Continuing case up to 2 weeks to investigate the advisability of noncourt probation supervision.

If a court petition is denied, the referring agency may request a court review. Detained minors brought to the center by the police may be released or detained by the center and turned over to the probation department.

Maryland Juvenile Services Administration

The State of Maryland's networking effort was initially undertaken by the Juvenile Services Administration (JSA). In 1978, the Office for Children and Youth (OCY) was created with the mandate to study youth programs and services to identify duplications, inefficiencies, ineffectiveness, or unmet needs, and to coordinate services to maximize resources. Accordingly, the OCY supported the development of the network, with the JSA assuming a leadership role. The JSA and OCY are now working together in this effort.

The network plan developed by the JSA involves training 10 to 15 state youth program decisionmakers, both public and private, and private citizens and youth in order to promote the collaborative, systematic preparation of policies and programs of delinquency prevention. This training will include developing formal contracts among these key participants to effect collaboration, cooperation, and communication. The training will be replicated at the local level for 24 JSA staff on local children's councils

as well as private citizens and youth around the same issues of collaboration.

The network is conceptualized as operating at State, city/county, and community levels. The State network's responsibilities will include setting uniform prevention program standards and developing and improving programs and prevention services through administrative controls and financial and technical assistance. State participants will include legislators, private agency representatives, and youth agency officials.

The city/county network is intended to facilitate assessment of community conditions, problems, and needs prior to program implementation and changes in these conditions. Access to this local knowledge, channels for local input, and formulation of delinquency prevention plans will be provided through local government officials, public and private agency officials, and citizens and youth.

At the community level, participants will be trained to determine specific needs, identify existing community resources and resource gaps, present possible solutions, operate specific programs, and provide feedback on the success or failure of the various program approaches.

As the overall coordinating agency, JSA will identify and select network participants and provide technical assistance with the following objectives:

- Identify the need and desirability of collaboration among and between youth-serving agencies, citizens, and youth
- Define existing state-of-prevention programming, available resources for this programming, and existing service gaps in this area
- Identify a desired future state for primary prevention programming
- Identify primary delinquency prevention strategies
- Develop local action plans in this area
- Establish continuous operation of network's capacity for planning and implementation.

JSA will submit a grant application in October 1979 for funds for participant training and expects to begin implementing its plans in December 1979.

Results

An assessment of the Lucas County Task Force on Truancy made by the Toledo-Lucas County Criminal Justice Regional Planning Unit in 1978 was hampered by methodological problems and lack of data. The evaluators recommended that greater emphasis be placed on elementary school attendance, specific procedures be established for determining when excessive absence warrants referral, paperwork be minimized to avoid discouraging referral, and greater efforts be made to expedite the provision of Children's Services Board services and court processes.

The study reported that of the 109,690 children enrolled in school 1,986 were referred to attendance offices. Of these, 607 were referred to the Children's Services Board for truancy, 136 were registered at court, and 25 were held in detention facilities. Nineteen parents were referred to court for failure to send their children to school.

The senior planner at the Regional Planning Unit feels the Truancy Task Force has reduced truancy, had a stabilizing influence on the school environment, reduced the isolation of service agencies, and encouraged communication.

The school representative at the Los Angeles County Juvenile Justice Center feels the center has demonstrated that the concept is workable and that agency interaction expedites case handling. The various agencies are in philosophical agreement, and none of them seems threatened by sharing jurisdiction and responsibilities.

Replication Issues

The applicability of networking to any local system of service delivery depends on the local situation, for a network can take many forms and local situations vary immensely. Wherever a lack of coordination is perceived as decreasing efficiency and effectiveness, a network approach would be applicable. The type of network to be developed must be suitable to the local service system. For instance, a geographically centralized system such as the Los Angeles Juvenile Jus-

tice Center would be applicable only to high-density areas with sufficient funds available.

Required Resources

The organization of a network of service providers requires that the agencies, organizations, and individuals involved be committed to increasing cooperation and communication with each other. Resources required beyond this commitment also depend on the local situation and the type of networking envisioned. The network may be one of theory and procedure, requiring few additional resources. On the other hand, opening a new building, as was done in Los Angeles County, would require the necessary political and governmental support as well as a great deal of planning and funding.

References

Los Angeles County Ad Hoc Committee on Juvenile Justice, Proposal: Juvenile Justice Center, submitted to Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, January 1974.

Toledo-Lucas County Criminal Justice Planning Unit, An Assessment of the Lucas County Task Force on Truancy, September 1978.

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7625 South Central Avenue
Los Angeles, California 90001
(213) 588-7281

Samples of forms used by agencies in Lucas County (Ohio) in handling truancy cases are appended:

A. "Disposition of Truancy Cases"--an excerpt from "A Manual for Service for Troubled Youth in Lucas County"

B. Student Case Summary form

C. Two Truancy Notification forms

D. Lucas County Children Services Board form.

For further information on this program, or to request direct technical assistance in implementing a similar program, contact the National Center or the Regional Center nearest you. NSRN technical assistance is available at no cost to requestors.

The following is a refined excerpt from A Manual for Services for Troubled Youth in Lucas County, pages 1-6, 1-7, 1-8.

Attachment A

VI. DISPOSITION OF TRUANCY CASES:

*See Truancy Policy and Procedures Manual for referral to Children Services Board.

When a truancy referral is made according to the county wide truancy policy the Lucas County Children Services Board will them make a contact within two (2) working days of the date of the request. At the time of this contact, the Children Services Board worker will restate the reason for the referral and the role of Children Services Board in assisting the child and family in resolving those problems which may have contributed to the truancy. The family will be informed of the services available from Children Services Board; parent child counseling, child guidance, marital counseling, homeguide service homemaker service, day care service, child placement services (foster care, group home care, residential placement, emergency shelter care). Client participation must be voluntary UNLESS Lucas County Children Services Board must intervene for the protection of the child.

Within the first ten (10) working days of the sixty (60) day cycle, an evaluation of the family will be made by the Children Services Board worker. At this time, the referral source will be alerted to the service plan via the Report of Services by the Lucas County Children Services Board staff person responsible for service delivery. This service plan will highlight the problems, child and family participation, and one of the recommendations listed below:

A. If the family accepts the Children Services Board offer of service and shows proof of their commitment, a case plan will be developed utilizing one or more of the services of the agency. In addition other agency services may be requested as needed. This case plan will automatically ensure that the family receive sixty (60) days of on-going service.

   At the completion of sixty (60) days of service a complete review will be made of service and the child's school behavior and attendance. Based on this review, a Report of Service (Sections A-B-C) and recommendation will be made. This report and recommendation will be made available to the child-family, the schools and service providers. The alternative recommendations may be:

   1. Termination of service - successful goal achievement.

   2. Recycle a second sixty (60) day program of services.

   3. Referral back to the school with a recommendation to go back to a previous level of contact for further service, or to refer the situation to the next level of contact in an effort to find a solution to a student's truancy problem. The referral would review the services provided and the reason for the recommendation.

NOTE: At any point in the sixty (60) day service program, Action 1 or 3 may be made if warranted by the status of the consumer involvement.

B. A Report of Service (#319) will be made to the school with a recommendation regarding Court involvement due to the following reasons:

1. When the child and family are cooperative and open to Children Services Board services and attendance improves on an irregular basis, the Children Services Board worker will initiate a conference with the referral source. After sharing progress of the family, a decision regarding a referral to Juvenile Court will be reached conjointly by the referral source and Children Services Board worker.

2. When the child and family verbally cooperate with Children Services Board offer of service, but no action or positive behavior change occurs, the Children Services Board worker will contact the referral source with the recommendation that an unruly complaint be filed by the school.

3. Referrals of children sixteen (16) years and older, who refuse Children Services Board service despite the cooperation and interest of the parents, will immediately be returned to the referral source with a recommendation that an unruly complaint be filed by the school. Children Services Board worker will give on-going services (sixty (60) day cycle) to parents and younger siblings as a protective and preventive measure.

4. When the child and family verbally refuse service or are repeatedly unavailable for service, these referrals will be returned to the referral source with the recommendation that an unruly complaint be filed by the school.

5. Referrals in which the child accepts service but the parents refuse such service, Children Services Board worker will notify the referral source that a dependency/neglect action by Children Services Board is in the best interest of the child.

6. When parents accept service but are unable to participate within the evaluation period, the Children Services Board worker will initiate a conference with the referral source. After sharing home situation with the referral source, the Children Services Board worker will make a decision in the best interest of the child. This may entail the filing of a neglect or dependency complaint by the Children Services Board.

NOTE: A recommendation regarding an unruly complaint may be made by the Children Services Board worker. The specific complaint (See Section D - Lucas County Juvenile Court) will be left to the discreation of the school official managing the case and the unruly coordinator.

A recommendation by Children Services Board regarding dependency/neglect, requiring the protection of the child, will be acted upon by the Children Services Board worker.

STUDENT CASE SUMMARY

Attachment B

Child: _____

Birthdate: _____

Parent: _____

Address: _____

School: _____ Grade: _____

Attendance: Days Present _____ Days Absent _____ of which _____ are truancy.

Dates Truant:

Sept.:

Oct.:

Nov.:

Dec.:

Jan.:

Feb.:

March:

April:

May:

June:

Case History: (Write short paragraph giving efforts and results of school, hearing officer and C.S.B. contacts.)

This case is being referred to Juvenile Court for:

☐ Truant Child
☐ Failure to Send; Contributing to the Deliquency of a Minor

Form 071

Office Conferences :			
Telephone Contacts:			

PARENT CONTACTS:	Dates	By Whom	Results
Office Conferences:			
Telephone Contacts:			
Correspondence:			

SCHOOL SUPPORT PERSONNEL CONTACTS:	Dates	By Whom	Results
Office Conferences:			
Telephone Contacts:			
Home Visits:			
Correspondence:			

nitial Educational lanning Conference	Dates	By Whom	Result (List persons present)

Referred to C.S.B.	Dates	By Whom	Results

2nd Educational Planning Conference (if needed)	Dates	By Whom	Results

Attachment C

TO:

FROM:

DATE:

RE: Student: _____

Address: _____

Birthdate: _____ Grade: _____

School: _____

This is to notify you that the above named student has been absent _____ days of which _____ are truancy days.

We understand you are the caseworker assigned to this family. As the caseworker we are requesting you to investigate the reasons for this attendance problem and report your findings on CSB Form 319 (Report of Services) to this office. Your prompt attention will be appreciated.

A hearing has been scheduled on _____ at the hour of _____ for this student.

cc: Supervisor _____ Unit

Clear: Active with Court or OYC

TO:

FROM:

DATE:

RE: Student: _____

Address: _____

Birthdate: _____ Grade: _____

School: _____

This is to notify you that the above named student has been absent _____ days of which _____ are truancy days.

This is in violation of his/her probation. Would you please take the appropriate action to request a court hearing on this matter.

cc: Juvenile Court - Paul Sullivan
or
cc: Ohio Youth Commission - Larry Evans

LUCAS COUNTY CHILDREN SERVICES BOARD.
2500 River Road,
Maumee, Ohio. 43537.
Phone: 893-4861.

Attachment D

Reported to: _____

Address: _____

Reported by: _____

Service Status: Active: _____. Closed: _____

Family Name: _____
Address: _____
Father: _____. Mother: _____
Child: _____. Birthdate: _____
Child: _____. Birthdate: _____
Child: _____. Birthdate: _____
Child: _____. Birthdate: _____

C. S. B. Caseworker: _____. Unit: _____

Services Report: Planned: _____. Recycle: _____. Terminated: _____

____ Supervision.	____ Homemaker.	____ Day Care
____ Parent-Child Counsel.	____ Homeguide Service.	____ Foster C
____ Child Guidance.	____ Marital Counsel.	____ M. C. C.

Other Service Providers: _____

_____

Custody Held By: _____

Report: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Recommendation: _____

_____

_____

C.S.B. #319.
Copy Distribution: White copy—SCHOOL.
Yellow copy—CASEWORKER.